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[Get a t-shirt of "Latent"](#)**Latent** means that something is dormant and may become active in the future, as in a latent fault.

- Information processing and communications**
(including information technology and neural networks)
- : Latency refers to the inevitable delays inherent in computer systems, hardware devices such as integrated circuits, or networks.
- Sexuality and psychology**
- : Terms such as "latent homosexuality" mean a hidden inclination or potential for interest in the specified sexual interest or activity, which is either suppressed or not recognised, and which has not yet been explored "for real" or may never be explored in fact.
- Forensics**
- : A latent fingerprint is the identifiable impression made by a finger which is not immediately available (eg is on a difficult surface such as skin) but may be made available ("developed") by means of some appropriate technique.
- Dendrology**
- : A plant may have a 'latent bud'. This means that it only reproduces in favourable conditions, but it may remain in a bud state until such conditions appear.
- Virology**
- : The "quiet" or dormant stage of a virus. The virus just maintains its genome and does not do much else until favourable conditions for the lytic phase appear, in which the virus starts to replicate.

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References in classic literature

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But the puzzle has a real difficulty **latent** under it, to which Socrates will endeavour to find a reply.

Meno by [Plato](#) [View in context](#)

Otherwise we shall be compelled to believe that all our knowledge, all our store of images and memories, all our mental habits, are at all times existing in some **latent** mental form, and are not merely aroused by the stimuli which lead to their display.

The Analysis of Mind by [Russell, Bertrand](#) [View in context](#)

He had detected the **latent** sensuality, which unfolded under his delicate sense of her nature's requirements like a torpid, torrid, sensitive blossom.

The Awakening and Selected Short Stories by [Chopin, Kate](#) [View in context](#)

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